

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 BNDD-05 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-13 JUSE-00

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SNM-02 SY-10 TRSE-00 USIA-12 NSC-10

SCI-06 OMB-01 L-03 H-02 PA-03 PRS-01 AGR-20 HEW-08

DODE-00 SS-15 AID-20 IGA-02 RSR-01 /163 W

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R 200022 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6563

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 4434

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, MX

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS CONTROL

REF: MEXICO 3529

1. SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR AND DCM HAD ONE OF PERIODIC BREAKFAST MEETINGS MORNING OF JUNE 19 WITH ATTORNEY GENERAL OJEDA PAULLADA AND DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL ROSALES MIRANDA. SUBJECT TOUCHED UPON INCLUDED:

- 1) IMPRESSIVE SEIZURES IN RECENT MONTHS OF NARCOTICS;
- 2) USE IN ANTI- DRUG EFFORT OF CONFISCATED AIRCRAFT, BOATS AND VEHICLES;
- 3) POSSIBLE USE OF SURPLUS US EQUIPMENT IN DRUG ERADICATION EFFORT BY MEXICAN MILITARY;
- 4) STATE OF HERBICIDE RESEARCH PROGRAM;
- 5) USE OF MEXICAN BANK ACCOUNTS AS EVIDENCE AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKERS;
- 6) EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITH EMBASSY;
- 7) UPCOMING VISIT OF AMBASSADOR HANDLEY, AND
- 8) THE ARRIVAL OF THOMAS DEAN AS REPLACEMENT OF JOSEPH ARPAIO TO HEAD UP OFFICE OF NEWLY FORMED DEA. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING DISCUSSION OF RECENT SUCCESSES IN ANTI- DRUG EFFORT IN MEXICO, AG DESCRIBED VALUE OF NEW HELICOPTERS IN COVERING
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OTHERWISE IMPOSSIBLE TERRAIN IN EFFORT TO ERADICATE DRUG PLANTINGS. HE SAID THAT BY USING LARGE HELICOPTERS IT NOW POSSIBLE TO MOVE A NUMBER OF PLATOONS TO DIFFERENT AREAS IN ONE DAY COVERING MUCH LARGER SECTOR THAN HERETOFORE. THIS ALSO REDUCED NEED FOR LONG MARCHES AND INTRODUCED ELEMENT OF SUPRISE WHICH MAKING MARIJUANA AND POPPY CULTIVATION MORE DANGEROUS AND LESS ATTRACTIVE. OJEDA PAULLADA DESCRIBED WITH ENTHUSIASM HIS PLANS FOR EARLY ERADICATION CAMPAIGN THIS YEAR IN KEY STATES OF SINALOA, DURANGO AND CHIHUAHUA WHICH HE EXPECTED WOULD KEEP DRUG GROWERS FURTHER OFF BALANCE AND REDUCE AREA UNDER CULTIVATION.

SAID CAMPAIGN WOULD BEGIN MID- JULY AND NOT AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER AS NORMALLY THE CASE AND WOULD INVOLVE DOUBLING OF FEDERAL AGENTS WITH IMPROVED COORDINATION OF DIVERSE ELEMENTS EMPLOYED UNDER CAREFULLY SELECTED, HIGHLY COMPETENT AND RELIABLE LEADERSHIP.

3. IN THIS REGARD AG WAS QUERIED ABOUT THE USE OF VEHICLES, BOATS AND AIRCRAFT CONFISCATED BY GOM IN ANTI- DRUG EFFORT. (HE INFORMED US THAT 24 LIGHT AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN CONFISCATED IN RECENT MONTHS IN SAN LUIS COLORADO AREA ALONE.) AG SAID THIS MATERIAL HAD TO BE KEPT IN STORAGE UNTIL COMPLETION OF LEGAL PROSECUTION OF DEFENDENTS INVOLVED, AT WHICH TIME IT BECAME PROPERTY OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THAT HIS OFFICE HAD LITTLE USE FOR CONFISCATED AIRCRAFT FOR LACK OF PILOTS AND MAINTENANCE FACILITIES BUT ADDED THAT MINISTRY OF DEFENSE HAD CAPABILITY AND INTEREST IN USING SUCH AIRCRAFT.

4. WE INQUIRED AS TO GOM INTEREST IN POSSIBLE ACQUISITION OF SURPLUS US MILITARY EQUIPMENT FOR USE BY MEXICAN MILITARY IN DRUG ERADICATION EFFORT. OJEDA PAULLADA EXPRESSED INTEREST IN SMALL NUMBER OF USED HELICOPTERS AND POSSIBLY SOME GROJND EQUIPMENT BUT INDICATED THAT COST OF SUCH EQUIPMENT USED BY MILITARY IN ANTI- DRUG EFFORT WAS INCLUDED IN ATTORNEY GENERAL' S BUDGET. HE THEREFORE SUGGESTED THAT AVAILABILITY ANY SUCH EQUIPMENT FOR EXCLUSIVE OR PRIMARY USE IN ANTI- DRUG EFFORT BE BROUGHT TO ATTENTION HIS OFFICE. (THIS WOULD NOT, OF COURSE, EXCLUDE SEPARATE MEXICAN MILITARY PROCUREMENT OF SIMILAR EQUIPMENT FOR OTHER PURPOSES.)

5. ASKED ABOUT STATUS OF HERBICIDE RESEARCH PROJECT AG BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION RECENT DECLARATIONS BY SENATOR MIGUEL ANGEL BARBERENA AND DEPUTY MARCOS MANUEL SUAREZ IN OPPOSITION TO ANY
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SUCH PROGRAM ON ENVIRONMENTAL GROUNDS. HE SAID THEY MADE THIS DECLARATION IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR RECENT PRESS STATEMENTS REBUTTING CRITICISM OF MEXICAN DRUG EFFROT BY US CONGRESSMEN MURPHY AND STEELE. HE PROMISED TO PROVIDE FULL TEXT OF STATEMENT BY MEXICAN GONGRESSMENT AGAINST HERBICKDE RESEARCY PROGRAM. AG DID NOT GIVE US NAY GROUNDS FOR HOPE THAT GOM WOULD APPROVE THIS

PROGRAM, ADDING THAT GOM FOUND DESTRUCTION OF PLANTS LOCATED LEAST OF THEIR PROBLEMS IN ERADICATION EFFORT.

6. ON QUESTION OF USE OF BANK ACCOUNTS IN ATTEMPT TO GET AT KNOWN TRAFFICKERS AG REITERATED WHAT HE HAD TOLD US BEFORE THAT HIS OFFICE WAS ACTIVELY BUT QUIETLY ENGAGED IN CONFIDENTIAL REVIEW OF BANK ACCOUNTS OF SUSPECTED TRAFFICKERS AND WHERE LARGE UNEXPLAINABLE MOVEMENT OF FUNDS WERE NOTED. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT GOM PREFERS TO USE SUCH INFORMATION AS CLUES TO DRUG ACTIVITIES FOR WHICH PARTICIPANTS EVENTUALLY CAUGHT AND PROSECUTED, AVOIDING TO EXTENT POSSIBLE PUBLIC EXPOSURE THIS SOURCE OF INFORMATION WHICH WOULD CAUSE TRAFFICKERS TO MOVE ACCOUNTS TO BANKS IN US AND ELSEWHERE AND THUS OUT OF REACH OF MEXICAN AUTHORITIES. AS FAR AS PROVIDING EMBASSY SUCH INFORMATION ON MEXICAN BANK ACCOUNTS OF KNOWN US TRAFFICKERS, AG SAID THIS COULD BE DONE ON CONFIDENTIAL BASIS BUT BECAUSE OF MEXICAN LAW COULD NOT BE PROVIDED FOR USE IN US COURTS.

7. THE USEFULNESS OF TYPE OF INFORMATION PROVIDED AG BY DCM SEVERAL WEEKS AGO IN FORM OF "BLIND MEMO" ON NARCOTICS SITUATION IN STATE OF CHIHUAHUA (SEE REFTEL) WAS BRIEFLY DISCUSSED. ONCE AGAIN AG EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THAT MEMO AND ANY SUCH INFORMATION WE MAY BE IN POSITION PROVIDE IN FUTURE. HE INDICATED THAT SITUATION IN CHIHUAHUA WOULD SOON BECOME THE SUBJECT OF CLOSE ATTENTION BY FEDERAL AUTHORITIES.

8. WE INFORMED AG OF EXPECTED VISIT NEXT WEEK OF AMBASSADOR HANDLEY AND AFTER ASKING A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS ABOUT LATTER'S ROLE IN THE OVERALL USG ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORT AG READILY AGREED TO RECEIVE HIM. WE ALSO DISCUSSED WITH AG THE ASSIGNMENT OF THOMAS DEAN AS HEAD OF THE OFFICE IN MEXICO OF THE NEW DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION. HE WAS ALREADY AWARE OF SOME OF DEAN'S BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE IN ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORT. IN PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS AG HAD STATED HIS BELIEF IN EFFICACY OF PLACING OVERALL ANTI-DRUG EFFORT UNDER ONE CENTRAL ORGANIZATION.

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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